

Ogden, Utah  
June 4, 1967

Dear Beloved, President McKay:

I too, have been born of goodly parents and have been taught to love The Lord and to live as He wants us to. I Have spent many wonderful and happy hours attending Sunday School, Primary and other church activities with my friends. There we have been taught of the love of Christ for little Children and those who love The Lord. I remember what great joy and happiness filled me when I reached my eighth year and was taken into the waters of baptism. I remember talking with some of my friends, that day, as we waited for it to happen. Some of them expressed fear at the thought of being held under the water, yet I had no such feeling because, I could remember so strongly the teachings of my mother and sister Wilson, my Primary teacher. She had taught me that Jesus loved me and I knew that if Jesus loved me there was nothing to fear in this whole, wide, wonderful world as long as I loved Him in return.

After my baptism, I remember, I was so happy I thought I heard angels singing. Then, the even more wonderful feeling that came to me as I sat and felt Bishops Jensen's hands on my head as he confirmed me a member of the church and promised me the gift of the Holy Ghost, if I would do what was right in the sight of God. The years that followed have been wonderful and happy ones as I have felt myself grow in the Gospel under the wise teaching of my parents and others.

As I now look back and recall how quick the time passed and I was twelve years old, this age is a mile stone in the life of most Mormon Boys. It is an age when a whole new life begins to open up. I soon passed my twelfth year of life, I saw my friends receiving the Aaronic Priesthood and become active in their Deacon's Quorum, but for some reason I was not there with these friends with whom I had enjoyed Primary so much. They were able to learn their new duties in the Church by passing the Sacrament, the emblems of Christ's suffering on the Cross of Crucifixion for me, yet, I couldn't join my friends in this. They were able to bring the Fast Offerings of the faithful members to the Bishop, this I could not do. They were having quorum parties with their advisor, but I couldn't join with them. I could still go to Sunday School and MIA where I joined the Boy Scout Troop and there had the association of my friends.

I saw my friends advancing through the quorums of the Priesthood, learning more ways of service. Although I was in Sunday School and advancing through the ranks of scouting, I often felt left out because they had the brotherhood of the Priesthood. As I grew older I sometimes sensed a feeling of distance on the part of these, my friends, who had been so dear to me in my earlier years.

As the years passed I found myself attending fewer Sunday Schools and MIA meetings. Soon I was nineteen and I saw my lifelong friends being prepared to receive the Melchizedek Priesthood as well as preparing to go on missions for the Church. I sensed disappointment as I realized I could not be a missionary and carry the wonderful knowledge of Christ to others who don't know Him as I had learned to know Him in my childhood.

As these my friends left to serve The Lord as missionaries, I lost my last real ties with the Church and I began drifting away, I seemed to have the

feeling that I had reached a spiritual 'dead end'.

I continued my education in college, where I made many new friends. I tried to be active in Institute even as I had been in Seminary, but it all seemed so different. I guess it was because those childhood friends were no longer with me. I found myself associating more and more with young people who did not have the same ideals as my Mormon heritage had given to me. But, at least, there was no gulf between us because I didn't hold the priesthood, since they didn't either. As much as I seemed to enjoy these new found friends, life with them was lacking something. It just wasn't like it used to be when I was active in church.

One day, quite by chance, I met Lisa, a wonderful girl and we seemed to have so much in common. As we got better acquainted we found that both of us had been taught much the same when it came to an understanding of the love of Christ and of His great sacrifice made to open the way whereby we can come back into his presence. The months passed and my heart filled with happiness and thanksgiving for having found such a wonderful girl as Lisa. We began to make plans for our marriage. Some of those old friends who had by now returned from their missions and completed a couple of quarters of college work, were also making plans for marriage. But, what different plans they were. Oh, to be sure, we had Bishop Thomas perform our ceremony, but my old friends were taking their brides to the Temple, where dressed in the robes of the Holy Priesthood they were sealed for all time and eternity, by the power and authority of God. Bishop Thomas, by the power invested in him under the laws of the State of Utah married us for 'until death do you part.' Why the difference? I knew because I had been taught that the Temple Sealing is reserved for holders of the Melchizedek Priesthood, and that I did not have.

As my old friends continued to return, Lisa and I renewed old friendships and soon we attended church more frequently. I saw these old friends bearing their testimonies and relating the wonderful experiences of their missions. Their personalities glowed with fine qualities of leadership and I saw them being called to positions in the ward and the stake. On the other hand my spiritual progress seemed slow. At times I seemed to be at a stand still. Lacking the priesthood made it impossible for me to be called to serve in any responsibility of leadership in the Church. Because I was an Eagle Scout I did have an assignment with the Scouts in MIA which brought me great joy.

The day approached when my wonderful and faithful wife, Lisa, gave birth to our first child. After the birth of our son she became very ill. The Elders were called in. They administered to her, while all I could do was stand at the foot of the bed and watch and pray. Because of our faith, the mercy of God and the power of the priesthood, of these friends, exercised in her behalf, she was healed and soon took her place in our home again. She has been the type of mother to our children as mine was to me, teaching them to pray and trust in the Lord.

The day arrived when our first born son, David, was to receive his name and a father's blessing. What a dark cloud seemed to hang over me as I realized I could not give him that blessing because, this too is reserved for the Priesthood holder. Our wonderful Ward Teacher, brother Drayton, carried our son to the front of the chapel. In the circle were friends holding my son, and a life long friend giving him a Father's blessing by proxy. I was denied the privilege that some fathers have had since the dawn of creation, because I lacked the Holy Priesthood. I could sense, written upon my face, a feeling of sadness and yes, for the first time, some bitterness.

With the passing of time a second child, a beautiful girl, was given to us. She was a lovely child and because of her beauty and cheerful nature many were the friends who sought her companionship as she grew. Little did we realize the short life she was to share with us and others. At the age of six she was suddenly taken from us. A cold chill coursed down my spine as one day my wife said: "We will not be able to raise our little Jill in the hereafter, as will the Randall family who lost their daughter last year." They were sealed in the Temple and their children were sealed to them. Since our marriage will dissolve when we die, we'll not have need for children and our family life.

Nearly eight years have elapsed since our son was born.. He is now ready for baptism. He has been faithful in his attendance at Sunday School and Primary, and I seem in him a reflection of my own happy childhood. I contemplate and wonder about his future, will it be like mine has been? I find myself praying that he will not lack the blessings of the Priesthood as I have. Again, as it has so many times in the past, my friends will substitute for me in the baptism and confirmation of my son, again I will stand on the outside.

Now, I feel developing within me a spirit of bitterness the likes of which I have never felt before. I find myself on my knees, again and again, asking God to free my soul of this canker. But it persists. I see others who have recently been baptized into the Church, and after a few short weeks receive the Priesthood. Now we have 'Project Temple' organized in our stake and I see men with whom I have worked and associated for years being given special lessons and confessions. Men who have been indifferent to the Church, men who have had their nasty little jokes about the Word of Wisdom, about Tithing and many of the things that have meant so much to me. Men who had received the Priesthood in their youth but who denied it's power and through their own ignorance had damned themselves far more than I who had not received the Priesthood. Men, who though they held the Melchizedek Priesthood had thought so little of the women they loved that they denied them the blessings of a Temple Sealing. Yes, and some who had scoffed so much at the Church that they were married by a justice of the peace. Now, I see these men suddenly so swept up in a wave of religious revival that after twelve short weeks of special lessons are to be given the Holy Melchisedek Priesthood and take their wives and children to the Temple where they will be endowed and sealed. This, in spite of my faithfulness, I am denied.

I begin to wonder of the justice of such things and as I wonder the realization strikes me like ten thousand bolts of lightning. I see myself a man, a child of God, one who knows of the great love and mercy of God, one who knows of the great redemptive powers of Jesus Christ, one who knows of the tremendous power embodied in the Holy Priesthood of God. Yes, one who knows that without the Holy Priesthood there can be no Church, nor can man reach perfection, eternal life and Celestial Exaltation.

As these truths dawn on me, even as they have many times before, I find myself shocked out of this nightmarish day dream with the realization that it is not nearly a bad dream, but it is the truth. I realize more fully than ever before that as things stand now, I cannot receive the Holy Priesthood nor can my son for we are black, and the blood of Caine courses through and contaminates our mortal bodies. One question stands foremost in my mind, is this the will of God or the will of man?

Sincerely yours

David Gillespie